

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The invention pertains to the field of computer programming contained within existing ~~stand alone, non-integrated~~ electronic redemption bingo machines. The inventor encountered difficulties in several jurisdictions regarding the legality of operating ~~stand alone, non-integrated~~ electronic redemption pinball bingo machines in which the credits "won" by the successful play of the machine are commingled with the credit received when money was deposited into a machine ("paid" credits). In certain jurisdictions, it is legally preferable to have the "won" credits and "paid" credits separated into distinct classifications so as to not be classified as "free replays", which, in some jurisdictions, may be illegal to operate.

Additionally, the inventors, wanting to increase the skill of the game and/or the player's control over the operation of a game, devised a system to utilize an electronic flipper in which the player has the determination as to the pattern of the balls in play.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The invention modifies an ~~a stand-alone, non-integrated~~ electronic redemption pinball bingo machine to separate “won” credits and “paid” credits into distinct categories, thereby eliminating “free replay” feature concerns encountered by the inventors in certain jurisdictions. The inventors also enhanced the skill of a game with the installation and coordination of an electronic flipper to enhance the player’s control over the outcome of a game, thereby opening the game to new jurisdictions.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure #1 is a diagrammatic illustration of the game processor with the additional external processor used in a game apparatus. (Withdrawn)

Figure #2 is a block diagram of an external processor used in a game apparatus. (Withdrawn)

Figure #3 is a flow diagram illustrating a process present in a first version of a program as submitted. (Withdrawn)

Figure #4 is a flow diagram illustrating a process present in a second version of the program submitted. (Withdrawn)

Figure #5 is a diagram illustrating the layout of the physical component of the standalone, non-integrated electronic redemption bingo machine. (Withdrawn)

The following concepts are incorporated in an ~~a stand-alone, non-integrated~~ existing electronic bingo game in order to add new skill features and enhance existing features.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

PROGRAM

A program, in conjunction with physical modifications to the bingo game, was developed to modify ~~the~~ a subject machine to accept US Dollars, with coin acceptance also being possible. A series of timed dollar bill validator or coin mechanism pulses transfers inserted money amounts to a microprocessor that stores the pulses in memory ~~as detailed in Figures #1 and #2~~, thereby permitting the accessing of the memory and displays the pulses as "Paid Credits", a new category. Pulses can be configured to any monetary pulse combination desired, with the most common configuration being \$1.00 equal to 20 credits, with each credit having a value of \$0.05.

In the first version of programming, the, play of the machine may only be initiated by using "paid credits". Another category, labeled "won credits", was also established to account for any credits won by the player through the play of the machine. Through this process, ~~as detailed in Figure #3~~, there is a strict accounting of credits paid and won by the player and limits are placed on what the player can do with each amount. If insufficient "paid credits" remain to begin play, more money must be inserted to begin play, even if sufficient "won credits" are available. "Won credits" must be used to play additional balls within a game prior to being able to use any "paid credits" for this purpose. Remaining "won credits" are electronically transferred to a ticket dispenser or printer at the player's option when play is complete. ~~(See Figures #1, #2 and #3)~~

A program version works as described above, but combines both "paid credits" and "won credits" into a new category labeled "credits", ~~as detailed in Figure #4~~. This allows a machine to start a new game if sufficient "credits" remain, regardless of whether such credits are paid for or have been won. The player has the option of electronically transferring the "credits" to the ticket dispenser or printer when play is complete. ~~(See Figures #1, #2 and #4)~~

Included within the invention is programming of the nature stated above that permits the segregation or inclusion of "paid" or "won" credits in an existing ~~stand alone, non-integrated~~ electronic redemption bingo machines. Additionally included are modifications permitting a machine to utilize an electro mechanical flippers, mounted in the existing playfield of a machine and powered by a

separate power supply, with the engagement button being installed at the upper, front, right side of the body of a machine, that players may use to alter the course of the balls on the playfield of a game, along with alterations to the cabinet of a machine to include a metal cabinet, mounted to the front of the floor of the machine, next to the main door, to house the dollar bill acceptor as well as the printer or ticket dispenser, which have both been wired into the machine's hardware and harness.

The invention is patentable over Burnside '322, '077, and '619 as well as LeStrange '079, and Kotoyori '876 as the invention is not obvious to one of ordinary skill in view of the above citations. While not disclosing most aspects of the invention disclosed herein, Burnside discloses a scoring circuit, score control mechanism and multiplier which registers the proper scoring of an individuals success in play of the Burnside invention. Burnside does disclose drawings and mechanical inventions that are similar to existing bingo devices of a nature that may be similar in appearance to the existing devices to which enhances disclosed herein would be utilized. Additionally, Burnside is not designed to reward individuals with any form of reward for play of a device in any manner other than achieving a relative score.

Likewise, disclosures in Kotoyori '876 and LeStrange '079 are enhancements to then existing concepts and inventions that do not include specifications similar in nature to the invention. While LeStrange '079 discloses a metering scheme to track various monetary inputs, plays, wins, replays, and losses, LeStrange '079 does not disclose or envision concepts described herein whereby individuals using the invention described herein would be permitted to not simply distinguish between monetary inputs and rewards to individuals playing a device, but to separate the credits inserted through monetary input from credits issued to an individual player as a reward for successful play of a device. Pursuant to the disclosures made herein, not envisioned by prior art, the individual play of a device may limited to either activation by monetary insertion for credit input or via prior credits "won" by individual play of a device. LeStrange '079 simply envisions a scheme for accounting meters and mechanisms, not for options for use of credits inserted and credits "won".

Not included in the invention are the generic and basic design of the ~~non-integrated~~ electronic redemption bingo machines, including specifications of the machines related to the dispensing of the playfield object, general scoring sequence, artwork design, and electronic designs of machines not specifically altered by the invention.

At Examiner request, Applicant points to an additional microprocessor and separation of credits introduced by monetary input device contained in the original disclosure by Applicant under the Detailed Description Of The Invention: The Program.

MACHINE

A machine has been adapted to accommodate electro mechanical flippers that players may use to alter the course of the balls on the playfield of a game. The flipper is mounted in the existing playfield of a machine and powered by a separate power supply, with the engagement button being installed at the upper, front, right side of the body of a machine. Additionally, the cabinet of a machine has been altered to include a metal cabinet, mounted to the front of the floor, next to the main door, to house the dollar bill acceptor as well as the printer or ticket dispenser, which have both been wired into the hardware and harness. ~~(See Figure #5)~~

DISPLAY

The “back glass” of a machine has been altered to reflect the two (2) versions of Program, with a first version having “paid credits” and “won credits” while a second version has only “credits”.